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coast, and began the study with much misgiving. The results were surprisingly satisfactory.

After a few weeks I found that I had sufficient knowledge of Chinook to dispense with interpreters and deal directly with the older people, a tremendous advantage. Pride of ancestry is one of the strongest characteristics of the Bella Coola, and once convinced of my sincere interest in and respect for their history, they were willing to talk. They resent the condescension with which most white men regard them, so that contact with one who was friendly and sympathetic came as a pleasant surprise. There were, of course, difficulties. The canning season had begun and every able-bodied man was working away from the village. The conviction of each person that he was the best source of information, and that conferences with another were useless or unreliable, caused distrust. The desire of each informant to discuss only what interested him; the complexity of Bella Coola life itself; the necessity of checking every statement, and the extreme difficulty of doing so on account of discrepancies in the myths of different families; the fear, almost groundless, of each individual that someone else had infringed on his rights by recounting some legend; and, not least, the need for tact, patience, and a sense of humour under all conditions, were some of the obstacles to be surmounted. Nor was Chinook entirely satisfactory. It has enough words for matters pertaining to fishing, hunting, and trading, but for the realms of sociology or theology it is inadequate. This difficulty could not have been overcome without the patient help of my informants. Animated by the desire to help, they used every expedient in the way of parallel and synonym to explain obscure terms. Sometimes a younger man was called in for some abstruse meaning; more often it gradually became clear from different applications. Once the significance of a word was definitely understood, I made a note of it and used it henceforth. A useful vocabulary was thus built up, and conversations were carried on in mixed Bella Coola and Chinook, eked out by whatever English words were known by the person with

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773 have been many changes. Raven, the culture hero, taught
829 the early settlers many useful arts, and they were themselves so powerful that they were able to create ceremonial and other prerogatives in a manner impossible to their descendants. Moreover, the people realize that they have been influenced by neighbouring tribes since that time, but in spite of these additions, they believe that their life is patterned on that of their earliest forbears.

[181] As a group, the Bella Coola are philosophers. They demand a reason for everything, though once a reason has been given, and accepted, they think no more about the matter. The elaboration of Bella Coola mythology may be due in part to their desire to explain their social organization; but without question these myths, now accepted as facts, have had a great influence on the lives of the people. In fact the social structure of the tribe has tended to conform to the myths.

621 It is believed that each group of first people formed a village
773 community, and pre-empted hunting-grounds in the vicinity.
These usually consisted of small valleys opening from the main
[361] Bella Coola River, tracts which could thus be easily defined.
[226] Each group also took possession of a suitable part of the river for a salmon-weir, or, if located on the coast, a convenient place for an ocean fish-trap. In course of time the first people married, of necessity with members of other villages. According
[591] to mythology, and equally according to modern practice, the women usually moved to the villages of their husbands. When
773 a child was born, it naturally grew up to share in the hunting-grounds of its father's village. Moreover, the father was able to bestow on his child various ceremonial dances; the concepts of some he had brought with him from above, others he had formulated on this earth. It is assumed that all the first people were mighty chiefs, able to initiate rites in a way that few modern men have been able to equal. But the mothers of these children, the first born on this earth, did not surrender the privileges of their own villages at marriage. Consequently, their children were of almost as much interest to the brothers

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142 sally used but the older people state that beards were by no
144 means rare in former times. Careful inquiries were made
[302] concerning the ancestry of a man, about seventy years of age in 1922, whose curly beard suggests that he must be a half-breed, as indeed he is assumed to be by the white settlers of the valley. His father was *Potlas*, the most influential chief of recent years, his mother was herself the daughter of an important chief. None of the older men had ever heard the slightest rumour of faithlessness on her part. There were white
[648] traders on the coast at the time of his birth, and intercourse with
[567] slave women and others of low family was not uncommon, but
[622] it would have been difficult for a chief's wife to misconduct herself, and still more difficult for her to conceal all knowledge of it in view of the open life which prevailed at that period. Moreover, it is said that *Potlas* himself had a similar beard, as did also the parents of several men who in 1922 were fifty or sixty years of age.

142 Although the possibility of white mixture cannot be over-
144 looked in the case of this one individual, one must not dis-
826 regard the opinion of the people themselves on hairiness in
[302] general. They are proud of it and regard beards and moustaches as marks of virility given to them by *Ałquntäm*; baldness and lack of facial hair are considered a sign of weakness. They aver that their fathers and grandfathers were even more
[186] hirsute than they. Furthermore, they point out with pride that this is a difference between themselves and the tribes of the interior, who are, as they say in scorn, "hairless like Chinamen." Finally, it is noteworthy that the hair on the head of many Bella Coola is wavy, or even curly (see Plate 20), instead of straight as among the majority of Indian tribes.[1]

Character

●181 It is an almost impossible task to describe briefly the characteristics of a people. Those of the Bella Coola have

[1] This characteristic has led the writer to wonder if it could possibly have been caused by Ainu mixture.

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been displayed in their customs and beliefs, their habits, practices, and folk-lore, their outlook both towards the supernatural world and towards their fellows. 181

The following additional observations are the result of personal knowledge, and recorded after considerable thought.

When a white man begins to understand the Bella Coola, he cannot fail to be impressed by their deep belief in the supernatural. To them religion is no mental abstraction, but a living reality. They feel the presence of strange creatures around them, and they recognize non-human powers in every manifestation of their own minds; in fact, every incident, good or bad, is attributed to supernatural intervention. This does not mean that they regard life with stoic indifference, content to murmur *Kismet* at whatever fate befalls them. They realize that supernatural powers have endowed them with brains, with physical strength, and with the ability to win favour and gain help from active superhuman beings, and consequently they strive in a world teeming with potent forces. The individual toils as does a white man in the struggle of life, but he attributes his fortune, not to luck or to his unaided exertions, but to the assistance of non-human agents. If he is fortunate, it is because his spirit has been active; if unfortunate, because it has been too inert to protect him. 181 771

Contact with white men, particularly with missionaries, has raised tremendous problems for the Bella Coola. The older people have been but little affected; they may state that they are Christians, believing in the white man's god, but this often means only the knowledge of one more supernatural being whom they add to the already rich pantheon. It is quite otherwise with the younger people, particularly with those who have been away at school. Some adopt the new faith with fervor, continuing to see the same visions and to experience the same mental exaltations, but attributing them to Christianity. To others, however, loss of belief in their own faith has caused a general scepticism; though they may accept the new religion, it does not become the vital force which the old was to their [181] 177 771

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177 fathers. Inherited beliefs are too deep-rooted to pass away
771 entirely within a few generations. Even those who claim to
[181] have adopted the new faith remain convinced of the potency of magic, and of the existence of those supernatural creatures which do not actively conflict with the white man's creed. Such lack of consistency is a world-wide trait, particularly intelligible among the Bella Coola whose philosophy abounds in contradictions, dependent upon statements handed down in the origin myths of different families.

626 The Bella Coola are constrained not only by the omni-
[181] presence of supernatural beings; they are constantly subjected to the influence of their fellows. They are far less individualistic than white people. A chief may boast that he can do as
[622] he pleases, that he can disregard the restrictions of lesser men; he often does so, but only because public opinion recognizes that he has reached a position of eminence by giving many potlatches. The duly validated warrior is brave because he
[703] feels that everyone is aware of his valour. The man who per-
[769] forms some ceremony in accordance with an ancestral myth incorporates himself with his forbears, and is strengthened by the conviction that he has gained their support and approbation. In every phase of life, a person is profoundly affected
177 by the approval or disapproval of his neighbours. At present
626 the construction of small houses, each occupied by a single
342 family, makes it possible for a man to hide himself, or to do work unknown to the rest of the community. This lessens the force of public opinion, although it is even now more potent than conscience in checking anti-social acts. Formerly, in communal houses, every action was fully known, making individual freedom of thought and act virtually impossible. A man
[602] is chiefly influenced by his relatives who take a great share in what the white man would consider purely family affairs. The effect of the group upon the individual must not be overlooked, nor can it be over-stressed in a study of these people.

177 The education and conversion of the younger men have
626 enormously lessened their reliance upon their fellows. In former
182
561

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times, older relatives were revered, not only as senior members of the ancestral family, but as those most familiar with myths and other cherished possessions. With the spread of new ideas, the young people no longer respect the lore of their elders, and consequently do not heed their admonitions and advice. Theoretically, such self-reliance would seem desirable, but in practice it has led to unfortunate results. A young man, considering himself superior to the older people, glories in acting on his own initiative, but too often he lacks the requisite strength of character to guide his own life. If he wishes to drink, he does so; if he desires to marry, he chooses his mate without considering the transmission of ancestral rights which stabilized unions in former times; if he tires of his wife, he deserts her for another; if he cheats or steals, he is no longer restrained by relatives who fear disgrace. The elders, incapable of stemming the tide, watch sadly and ask seriously whether the coming of the white man has brought compensation for the loss it has caused. It is deplorable that the emancipation of the younger men and women has taken place before the development of the sense of individual responsibility and conscience which public opinion formerly rendered less necessary. Christianity provides a moral code for those who are fully converted, but for the many in the transition stage, the break-down of the old system of family influence has been tragic.

Profound religious beliefs and lack of individual initiative are shared by all Bella Coola with the exception, perhaps, of a few of the younger people who, having been educated at white man's schools, have adopted the new outlook unconditionally. In most characteristics they display as wide variability as any other people. In truthfulness, for example, they range from one extreme to the other. As the writer became familiar with the older men, he found it possible to recognize without difficulty the strength of some and the weakness of others. There are liars, but they can be easily detected owing to their lack of finesse. It is a pleasure to record the reliability of the author's friends and informants. Their veracity was checked repeat-